

Benjamin Warner's Knapsack

(from the Fort Ticonderoga Museum)

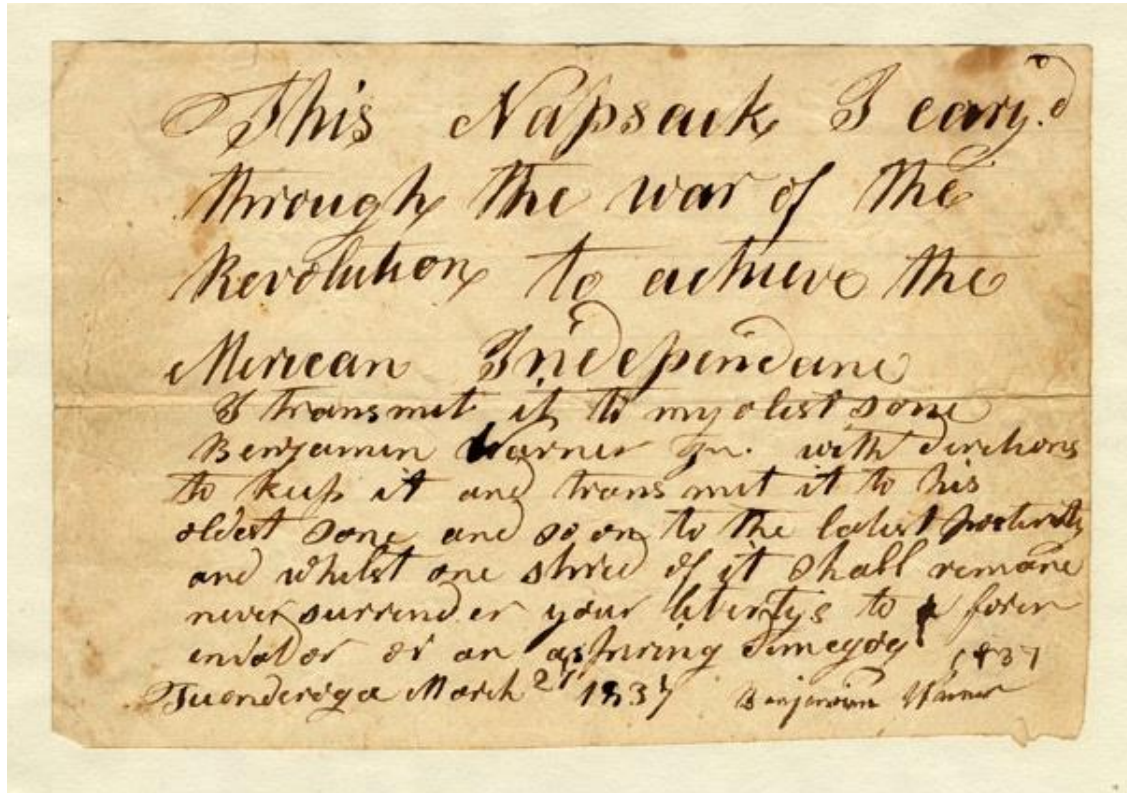
In 1928 [Fort Ticonderoga](#) was given the honor of ensuring the preservation of an object that was once commonplace in the American Revolutionary War army, but that today may be a one-of-a-kind object. It is a soldier's knapsack. This worn artifact may be the only extant example of a knapsack issued to Continental troops in the early years of the American Revolution. It belonged to Benjamin Warner (1757-1846) of New Haven, Connecticut. Warner enlisted on May 8, 1775 in Col. David Wooster's 1st Connecticut Regiment serving at Roxbury, MA. In the fall of that year Warner volunteered for the march to Quebec serving in Col. Samuel Wyllys' 2nd Connecticut Regiment. Benjamin Warner served in his local state militia in 1776 until he was called to arms on August 6, 1776 and sent to New York where he was present for the Battle of Long Island. He again served in the militia during the summer and fall of 1777. His final service occurred in 1780 when he was drafted into Col. John Lamb's 2nd Continental Artillery Regiment on July 20 and served most of his time at Orangetown, New Jersey. After the Revolution Benjamin Warner settled in Ticonderoga where he spent the remainder of his life.



Benjamin Warner's knapsack

The body of Warner's knapsack is composed of one large pocket and a flap that originally held a second pocket of similar size. The knapsack originally had two leather shoulder straps with which to carry it on a person's back and three narrow leather straps to secure the flap. Evidence for the three closure straps can be seen on the bottom edge of the flap.

Although Warner's knapsack is an amazing object, the knapsack held much deeper meaning to him and he wanted to ensure that it survived as a reminder of the liberty that America achieved with the War for Independence. In 1837 Benjamin Warner penned a short note instructing how the knapsack should be preserved. The note reads:



Benjamin Warners handwritten note instructing his descendants to preserve his Revolutionary War knapsack

“This Napsack I carryd Through the War of the Revolution to achieve the American Independence I Transmit it to my oldest sone Benjamin Warner Jr. with directions to keep it and transmit it to his oldest sone and so on to the latest posterity and whilst one shred of it shall remain never surrender you librtys to a foren envador or an aspiring demegog. Benjamin Warner Ticonderoga March 27, 1837”

These are remarkable words. The sentiment that Warner conveys in his note is even more meaningful because of his personal connection helping the United States earn its freedom. With this charge to preserve his knapsack “whilst one shred of it shall remain” comes great responsibility. [Fort Ticonderoga’s mission](#) is “To ensure that present and future generations learn from the struggles, sacrifices and victories that shaped the nations of North America and changed world history” and it is the same sentiment that I believe Benjamin Warner was conveying to the future in 1837.

Benjamin Warner’s knapsack and handwritten note is featured in Fort Ticonderoga’s newest exhibit, [Founding Fashion](#) located in the exhibition gallery on the lower level of the Deborah Clarke Mars Education Center.

Blog post by Christopher D. Fox, *Curator*